

Veronika Munk answers Frequently Asked Questions on index's situation

What is the conflict?

Based on an outside initiative, Index.hu's board of directors had taken a step towards a complete overhaul of the structure of the site's editorial staff. This move would not have served its supposed goal of cutting costs, but it would have disrupted our staff and could have compromised our unified editorial standards.

Editor-in-Chief Szabolcs Dull had resisted the plan and published an article explaining that he feels the site's independence is in danger. During the long negotiations, top editors asked for tangible safeguards to protect the integrity and independence of Index.hu but received no reassuring answers.

What do we consider "independent operation?"

Years ago, we drew the line and set two conditions, namely that nobody tells us what we write and how, or with whom we're working or not working. Up to the start of the conflict, these conditions were met.

Why did everybody resign then?

We think that firing our editor-in-chief was an unacceptable move. The entirety of our staff requested the reinstatement of Szabolcs Dull on multiple occasions but despite our pleas, management did not budge. This is such a strong infringement on the editorial independence of Index.hu that we simply could not accept.

Of course, the reasons behind this decision are way more complex and we could explain them at length, but as our contracts have stringent confidentiality clauses that can only be waived by the owner of Index.hu, we are not in a position to do that.

Wasn't Szabolcs Dull fired for leaking trade secrets?

First of all, Szabolcs Dull consistently denies the alleged disclosure of confidential information, on top of that, an entire month had passed between the accusation and his termination. Secondly, the owner's public communication about the reason for Dull's dismissal had constantly changed. Dull made it clear several times: He has nothing to hide in this situation.

What is the situation in the Hungarian media landscape?

Hungarian media structure went through a huge transformation over the past ten years with more and more media outlets falling into the hands of businesspeople with close ties to the government.

Index.hu was Hungary's leading news site, and during the pandemic, we broke all readership records in Hungarian media, with 1-1.5 million readers signing on each day.

Will we create a new site?

We sincerely hope that we will manage to stay together, work together, and keep doing what we have been doing for the past 20 years. In the following weeks, the content of Index.hu will be created by the outgoing staff for one simple reason: It is our legal obligation. The termination of our employment is regulated by law, and the proprietor did not release.